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AUTHOR Morgan, Gwen G.
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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses three topics relevant to early child care and education: changing patterns in parenting; child care entitlements; and sex-role stereotyping and racism. Discussion of the first topic highlights the effects on parenting of such factors as: (1) high divorce rates; (2) poverty; (3) maternal employment; (4) shared parenting; and (5) lack of extended family support. To address these factors, support for changing parenting roles and educational support for parents are recommended. Discussion of the second topic, child care entitlements, examines the inability of working mothers, blue-collar workers, and those trying to escape from poverty to pay for high quality child care. It is argued that child care entitlements should not be based on government intervention in the family, but rather, should be consumer-oriented and supportive of parent choices. The use of vouchers for child care, and methods for funding child care entitlements, are considered. Recommendations for encouraging child care entitlements that support the family, and that base admission on the need for child care rather than on family income, are offered. The third topic discussed is sex-role stereotyping and racism. Although women make up 83.4 percent of elementary teachers, 80.4 percent of principals are men. The percentages of women in school administration are decreasing. As for the home, caring for children is still largely a woman's task. Recommendations for eliminating stereotyping in elementary curricula, teacher education, and media portrayals of women are offered, and roles that child advocacy organizations, public television, and private philanthropic organizations might play in promoting social justice, equity, and help for society's victims are suggested. (BC)

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BLUEPRINTS EDUCATION TASK FORCE
Early Education, Elementary Education, and Alternative Education

by Gwen G. Morgan

The group on early childhood, elementary, and alternative education identified three major issues: Changing Patterns in Parenting, Child Care Entitlement, and Sex Role Stereotyping and Racism.

Changing Patterns in Parenting

There is a growing national concern for the role of the family in America. The traditional family unit is being influenced by rapid changes in society. Parents are facing new choices and feeling new pressures. As they respond with their own ways of adapting to these new pressures, for themselves and their children, they find little support from society.

The concern is highlighted by the following evidence:

There is one divorce for nearly every two marriages in the United States, and the divorce rate has steadily increased for 12 straight years. At present, one child out of eight is living in a single parent family.

Whether poverty is the cause of marital instability or the result or both, the fact is that the correlation is great. Between 1959 and 1974, the number of very poor children in families headed by women rose from 4.1 million to 5.4 million.

Of the 2.8 million children under six who live in families headed by women, almost 80% are at incomes less than the true poverty threshold.

A majority of mothers hold jobs outside the home for economic reasons. The overwhelming reason mothers work is financial, although there are many women who enjoy their jobs and would continue to work even if they had a real economic choice. The labor force participation of wives with children under six is highest when the husband's income is between $5,000 and $7,000.

Gwen G. Morgan is the Director of The Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education, Wheelock College, Boston, MA. c October 1991

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Even in families where both parents work, there are still two million children who live below the official poverty level. In husband-wife families with working wives, women now account for 26% of the family income. Women entering the paid labor force in the 1960's account for well over half of the increase in the GNP during that period. The rise in the number of working women is apparently not a temporary phenomenon, and is economically significant.

These mothers are searching for ways to pursue a career and raise a family at the same time. Presently, one of every three children under the age of three has a working mother.

A growing number of fathers are taking an active role in child rearing, although not much data exists as yet. For instance, among the families of professional psychologists, roughly one-sixth to one-quarter of the care of children is reported to be by husbands. Other studies have found many men comparably engaged in child care.

And, about 8% of all children under 18 who were reported living in non-nuclear families were in non-nuclear families headed by a male in 1974.

In contrast to the former concentration on mothering exclusively, there is growing interest and data about the effects of shared parenting and multiple people in child caring roles. Many experts have surveyed the evidence concerning the effect on children of different child care arrangements. These reviews conclude that stable, responsive, consistent care is important, indeed critical, to young children. Recent studies also conclude that care of this nature can be, and often has been, given by a variety of different kinds of people -- fathers and mothers, grandparents, teenagers. Further, child care in centers and other people's homes has been found to have the same effect on the healthy growth of children that care in a good home by a child's own parents all the time has.

Parents without extended family members to support them and without support from the community are feeling overwhelmed. A recent Gallup Poll reported that one in ten of all mothers, randomly surveyed, "regretted having children." Isolated and lonely, working at two jobs or sometimes three in order to make ends meet, husbands and wives have little opportunity to communicate and support one another. Sadly, they are missing the joys of parenting which many older people remember so well.

Social science researchers, educators, and parents are also viewing the time when parenting takes place as a period of personal development, in which parents' own personal growth does not stop. The ways in which parents can be supported in this growth process needs further definition. We know that as our

society is presently organized, with women and children isolated in one place while the work place is somewhere else, it is an increasingly difficult task for the parent to develop as a person and nurture the development of young children during the crucial early years of life.

There should be no more challenging, exciting, or rewarding life task than to respond and interact with a growing person through all the stages of human development. American parents deserve to experience those joys, rather than being engulfed and alone with overwhelming responsibilities. We need to invent new ways to provide the supports which the small and stable community and the extended family once provided. No other society in human history has left the family so unsupported.

Parenthood is a time of personal development, which needs support from other adults. Parents cannot be isolated with young children and still find pleasure in their own and their children's growth.

Parents are searching for and trying to invent support systems to help them cope with societal changes.

Children have fundamental needs for personality development, health, and the foundations of learning which can only be met by parents who are satisfied in their parenting roles.

Recommendations

1. Support for changing patterns in parenting roles.

    a. Encourage parents to examine the traditional sex role involved in child rearing and work out creative and individual ways of sharing child care responsibilities.

    b. Society must be responsive to these innovative options and provide support systems for both men and women, such as paternity and maternity leaves, flexible work hours for men and women, paired jobs, and greater options for part-time work. Released time is needed from work for child care to meet special needs such as illness or other family crises.

    c. To begin to educate parents and employers to the benefits of implementing such practices, it is recommended that discussion groups join together at places of employment, inviting outside speakers if they choose, to study and discuss steps for creating a work life responsive to family needs and to parental sharing.

2. Educational support.

   a. It is recommended that inservice and preservice programs be provided for teachers to make them aware of the issues of parenting in a rapidly changing society and ways in which they can be supportive to the young parent. Teachers should see their role as advocates for parents as well as for the young child.

   b. Organizations such as Action for Children's Television and other media advocacy groups and child and parent advocacy groups should exert influence on the media to provide programming and advertising which portrays the positive aspects of shared parenting, for children as well as for parents.

Child Care Entitlements

Today we know more than ever before about the fundamental needs of young children during the crucial early years, when the foundations of their personality and ability to learn is formed. Yet our laws and entitlements are based on outmoded ideas from earlier periods in human history when children were not considered to be persons and childhood was not considered important. What we now know to be basic needs are not yet established as rights. All children should have a right to positive parenting.

We are strongly opposed, however, to establishment of a child care entitlement based on government intervention into the family (parens patriae). Young children's self-concept and identity are bound up with their families. One of the most important of children's needs is to have an autonomous family with its own family values to bargain and negotiate with the larger society and its institutions on behalf of its members. The only social policy appropriate for America is one which offers parent options and supports parent choices and parent values.

The old and well-established right which children already have to parental support must be extended to implement the knowledge which we now have of young children's needs for positive parenting.

When parents are not at home, they have a need and a right to support from their community in their essential child rearing obligations to their children. Child care supports the family and does not substitute for it. We use the term family very broadly to include the many different forms which it has always taken and new emerging forms. Professionals must learn to share their expertise with parents' in-depth knowledge of their children.

Statistically, mothers who work are doing so largely to put food on their tables and pay for shelter and necessary clothing. Three-fifths of America's blue collar and manual labor families are closer to poverty than to affluence, and this includes the earnings of the working mothers and fathers in two-income families. The average working-class family earns $9,500, including the incomes of all family members who work. Working wives have made possible even the modest standard of living that the average working family enjoys.

Because of discrimination, women and minority groups earn less than men and are forced to belong to a marginal work force which shifts in and out of unemployment with the needs of the economy.

Massachusetts' economy is completely dependent on the labor of working mothers. Twenty-eight percent of all mothers with children younger than six are working. The Children's Lobby estimates that 289,182 children need child care in Massachusetts. Of the 51,630 children in licensed day care centers, most are in part-day nursery or kindergarten programs. The state has licensed 1,732 family day care homes. Most child care is non-monetized. About one-tenth of working mothers are fortunate enough to have relatives to care for their children. Day care centers and nursery-kindergarten programs comprise only one-tenth of all arrangements. Nationally, about one-eighth of working mothers regularly leave their children at home -- alone.

Most families cannot afford the cost of quality child care. Sometimes they are able to make a satisfactory arrangement by barter or through relatives; sometimes they solve their child care problems by underpaying other women. Sometimes their work is at the expense of their children, since their budget, even with the increased family earnings from a second parent working, simply cannot cover child care expenses.

Sixty percent of American working class and manual labor families earn <u>below</u> the Bureau of Labor Statistic's "intermediate" family budget. A United Auto Workers study analyzing the budget brought out that: "The budget assumes that a family will own a toaster that will last for thirty-three years, a refrigerator and a range that will each last for seventeen years, a vacuum cleaner that will last for ten years. The budget assumes that a family will buy a two-year-old car and keep it for four years, and will pay for a tune-up once a year, a brake realignment every three years, and a front-end alignment every four years. The budget assumes that the husband will buy one year-round suit every four years...and one topcoat every eight and a half years...It assumes that the husband will take his wife to the movies once every three months, and that one of them will go to the movies once a year alone. The average family's two children are each allowed one movie every four

weeks. A total of two dollars and fifty-four cents per person per year is allowed for admission to all other events, from football and baseball games to plays or concerts. The budget allows nothing whatever for savings." Child care expenses for such a family have to be met by foregoing some of those other budget items.

Present public policy in Massachusetts, for those few children it subsidizes with federal-state money, exploits women's work by requiring that they be poor and remain poor in order to receive the child care entitlement. Thus, 120,000 children are entitled to remain poor by state policy, although only a fraction of that number are served.

In a society which does not have a policy of full-employment at a living wage, employment-related child care is not a reform; it is labor exploitation under the guise of "helping the poor." Under such conditions, Aid to Families with Dependent Children is the Welfare reform. Employment-related child care is only a reform when it offers economic opportunity to families who have been inappropriately placed on Welfare because society offered them no alternative, or when it offers that alternative to present families from being inappropriately and unwillingly consigned to Welfare.

Massachusetts spends $25 million on child care and, of that, <u>not one penny</u> rescues a single family from poverty and economic exploitation. That same money could be spent to better advantage if some of it could be spent in support of families trying to escape or avoid poverty, with some being spent for case work problems.

New federal opportunities exist under Title XX of the Social Security Amendments for the state to develop new policy for day care, with family supportive goals. A child care entitlement should be consumer-oriented and support parent choices in life. One system which might be seriously considered at this time is a regulated voucher system. Families could be given vouchers for child care, in the amount of a certain percentage of the total cost of care, based on their ability to pay the remainder. Vouchers could be prioritized. They could be used as credit cards are used in the day care program of the parents' choice, provided that program had been certified as meeting funding standards for quality.

The cost of such a program would probably only be met with a combination of federal, state, and local taxes, with incentives for private donations. Such a program would be built slowly and planned incrementally, since changing policies in other areas, shifts in the economy, and trends in patterns of family living will affect it. Rather than master planning, day care should be developed in small steps, within a fixed appropriation, in the

direction of parent demand as expressed by the choices they make. A voucher system would be highly suitable to this kind of incremental planning.

Quality child care is within the reach of this country, if we can separate it from repressive economic policies and develop appropriate goals of offering support to the American family in its child rearing obligations.

Before this can happen, decision-makers will have to rid themselves of the present bar chart mentality, and come to see that "the poor" are not a static bar on a chart, but real people who move in and out of poverty depending on opportunities or lack of support at critical times. The following fable is addressed to this problem in policy-making.

A FABLE

Long ago in a noble and compassionate land, the elders decided to save people who are drowning. A number of life savers were employed and stationed on the beach. These life savers had been trained through a study of charts of sand bars on the ocean floor. They were told that their life saving must be reserved for those who are drowning far out to sea, at the lowest sand bar, since their need for life saving is greatest. They were also trained never to look at faces.

The life savers were dedicated to their work. Each day they plunged into the sea and brought in the inert bodies of the drowning victims. Artificial respiration was applied, and some of the victims revived, though many did not.

As they made their way toward the drowning victims, the life savers passed by other swimmers who appealed to them for help. "I am losing my footing," a bather would say. "Reach out and help me get my feet under me or I may drown." The life savers, however, were not permitted to help such people, because the drowning people needed more. They continued to swim past the people just beginning to be engulfed, in order to bring in more drowning victims.

Their training had a curious effect on them. Since they never looked at faces, they never recognized the drowning victims as the same people who had been refused their help on earlier plunges into the sea. They thought the drowning victims were some other class of people.

Each year the numbers of drowning people increased, and more and more life savers had to be employed to bring them to shore. Nobody could understand why this should be, when the land was making such an effort with its dedicated and well-trained life savers.

Recommendations

1. Blueprints women should ask the platform committees of both political parties to include a child care plank, and should seek help from the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus and the Massachusetts Women's Lobby.

   The plank should establish a child care entitlement based on family supportive goals. Federal policy should encourage child care subsidy on a sliding fee scale from 0 - $12,000, without a notch effect between. In a scarcity of child care spaces, priority for admissions should be based on the need for child care (need to work, case work problems, lack of alternative arrangement for child) rather than income. Fees would be based on total family income, but eligibility would be based on day care need. The federal government should double its commitment to child care, and should offer with the new funds incentives to bring about greater state, local, and private commitment of funds.

2. At the state level, Blueprints women should support House 1577, a child care bill broadening the definitions of eligibility for child care so as to remove the repressive ceilings on economic opportunity. Letters should be sent to the members of the Human Services Committee. Both the Black Caucus and the Women's Caucus in the Legislature should be asked to help.

   The Governor's Commission on the Status of Women should support this bill. (Later note: they are.)

3. Professionals in early childhood education and elementary education need to become more sensitized to the need for greater support in public policy, and more skilled in participating in policy formation.

   Blueprints women should use their own spheres of influence to bring about forums for providing information exchange and skill development in these areas. An example is a meeting at Wheelock College on March 31 at 4:00 in the Little Theatre to discuss the specifics of getting child care legislation passed this year. The meeting has the dual purpose of bringing together support for the bill in a discussion to reach consensus on what to support and what further steps to take to bring about new child care policy, and also to educate students in the process of social policy through legislation.

4. It is very important that the media promote a more correct image of child care as a family support system. Blueprints women should use their spheres of influence to use all available public relations strategies to influence the media to address child care issues. Material in this Blueprints report can be a basis for public service messages through the media, using public relations resources as they are available to us.

Sex Role Stereotyping and Racism

Professionals who teach and care for children receive less and less pay as the children get younger. The closer the professional role comes to nurturance, the more it is undervalued. Teachers of young children who are at a critical period of life, when personality is formed and when the foundations of later learning are laid, face social biases -- even from women who consider themselves liberated -- which relate their professional skills to those of household help.

The average amount of money earned by directors of child care centers, nationally, was $4,000. Staff in child care centers are seldom above the minimum wage.

Elementary school teachers fare better, since they benefit from the efforts to raise the pay for school teachers in the high schools. Women are discriminated against widely in elementary education when administrators are selected. The number of women administrators is small. Of all school principals, 80.4% are men; 69.2% of all assistant principals are men. This last statistic might look like a gain for women, were it not for the fact that 83.4% of all elementary teachers are women. There is a substantial drop in women administrators, even below these small figures, beyond the elementary level. Only .1% of superintendents are women. In higher education institutions which train teachers, these figures are even worse. Only 2% of all professors of educational administration are women.

Further, the percentages of women in school administration are declining:

1928	1948	1958	1968	1973
55%	41%	38%	22.4%	19.6%

Ironically, the reason for the decline is probably the raised status of elementary education, so that men are now willing to work in the field.

There appears to be a connection between the fact that the care of children, which has been largely unmonetized in our society, is not valued, and the fact that women's work generally is undervalued. The International Labor Organization prepared a study "Equality of Opportunity and Treatment for Women Workers" in which they recommended that husbands share household work more equally with their working wives. Studies the world over have shown that working mothers have less than two-thirds the free time enjoyed by their husbands. "A more equitable sharing of the burden of housework and the care of children between men and women," says the report, "is one of the prerequisites of sexual equality." This recommendation is made not only to relieve the burden of extra work carried by women who work at paid jobs and unpaid household work as well, but also because there appears to be a connection between the value of women's work in paid employment because they are associated with unmonetized, and therefore not valued, family maintenance work. The study found that "in male-dominated societies women's work is apt, without reason, to be regarded as of less value than that of men." The study found that progress had been made in eliminating legal discrimination. But it points to the "stubborn persistence of the subtler types of discrimination which are hard to grasp, hard to fight, and hard to eliminate."

Caring for children is still largely a woman's task in our society. Children, when they are at home and not in school or child care, are cared for as follows:

<u>In Homes:</u>

10% of children (0-14, when not in school) - exclusively with mothers
5% of children (0-14, when not in school) - with mothers 158 hrs/wk
85% of children (0-14, when not in school) - with mothers 138 hrs/wk

When children are in child care, which includes all care not provided by a parent at home or in school, the children are with women in more than 85% of the instances.

<u>In Child Care:</u>

10% not paid
55% paid in kind — 95+% with women
1/3 cash paid

When children are in elementary school, they are with women most of the time.

In Elementary School:

83% with women

When Child Care is Paid:

Formal child care arrangements pay staff 60% of public school salaries. (10% of all child care arrangements.)
Informal arrangements for the care of children in homes (90% of all child care arrangements), most pay less than $20 per week.

Stereotyping of nurturance of children as a woman's role, and unvalued because it is largely unmonetized, spills over and may account for the subtle barriers women face in trying to enter other types of occupations. It certainly accounts for underpayment of teachers in nursery and child care programs.

We would not necessarily propose as a solution the monetization of all child care and family maintenance tasks. What is needed is a more equitable sharing of these tasks between men and women.

There is research indicating that this change is beginning to occur in young families. Our impressions, drawn from observation of patterns of living in the culture, support this. Even the Governor of Massachusetts, to his credit, takes his child-rearing obligations very seriously.

We believe that these indications of change are very important indicators that sex role stereotyping is beginning in small ways to break down. We have concluded that, important as legal changes such as Title IX, the Equal Rights Amendment, and Chapter 622 are, institutional change alone is not enough. Even if we had full employment, universal child care, and equal pay, as in the Soviet Union, sexism and racism will continue unless there is a change in values and attitudes. Blueprints women must join together in a commitment to bring about this value change.

All of us need such a change in order to achieve our own equal opportunity. In order to achieve it, we must commit ourselves to social justice for all sisters -- white, black, or other minorities.

We are not satisfied to support the achievement of an elite group of talented women in a society which exploits other women. A movement for women is for all women. Poverty and racism are women's issues.

The facts on the effects of racism on women are well known. Whatever discrimination is suffered by women, black women feel it more. When single parent families are poor, black single parent

families are poorer. The major problems for black families are not Welfare and unemployment, although those problems hit black people harder. The major problems are underemployment and low wages paid to countless working black women and their husbands in a society which still obviously discriminates.

Recommendations

1. There must be a reflection of these needed value changes in curricula for children, and in the training of the educators -- all the people who are mediators between the child and society.

   a. Curricula for children. Materials must be developed for overcoming stereotyped thinking about people based on sex or race, and widely used.

   In particular, two areas of elementary education have a causal relationship with later employment, and need to be infused with an effort to change the future. These are the teaching of math to girls and minority children, and the attitudes of guidance personnel, who must broaden their expectations for girls and minority children.

   Similarly, boys deserve more encouragement in the expressive arts. Nurturance and child caring home maintenance skills should be taught both sexes without carving out female and male roles.

   Blueprints women should use their spheres of influence with textbook publishers and foundations to encourage development of such new materials.

   b. Adult education of teachers. Inservice training must be added immediately to teacher training through the Massachusetts Teachers Association. Blueprints women should work with their Committee for the Advancement of Women in Education.

   The Boston Association for the Education of Young Children should regularly address issues of sex and race in its workshops and meetings.

   Blueprints women should use their spheres of influence wherever possible to bring about changes in teacher education, including suggesting workshops at meetings of organizations to which they belong, influencing academic institutions of which they are alumnae, and in other ways.

c. Education for parenting. The Blueprints Early Childhood/Elementary Task Force will review the federally-funded curriculum materials "Exploring Childhood," and will send comments to the federal government recommending inclusion of further material if needed on social values related to sexism and racism.

d. Blueprints women should influence foundations to provide funds for the development of better materials to help parents in their efforts to instill values in young children, expressly focusing on sex roles and racial equality.

2. Blueprints Higher Education Task Force should be asked to address this issue in the final Blueprints report.

The Blueprints final report should be sent to the Education Director at all Massachusetts institutions of learning, both formal and informal, where people are trained to work with children.

3. The media should portray women and black people in non-stereotypical ways in all programming and advertising. Men and women should both be seen in nurturant roles; men and women should both be seen as achieving in any field of endeavor. The same is true of black men and women.

A positive image of children in day care centers, and of children in families where mothers work, should appear in both advertising and programming, so that children who live such lives can find themselves on the screen and relate to what is shown. Further, the media need to overcome the lack of understanding of child care among the general public, which often has no idea what goes on there. Girls and boys, both black and white, should not be portrayed in stereotypical ways.

a. ACT and other organizations concerned with the media should be asked to broaden their concerns to include portrayal of men's, women's, and children's roles, in non-racist ways, in advertising and programming.

4. All organizations with a child advocacy agenda should focus on issues of value change in the direction of social justice along with issues of help to the victims of society. The Junior League's Advocacy Program should be sent the Blueprints report. Blueprints women should use their influence with any organizations in which we play a role.

5. Channel 2 should do a series of programs on children in our society, which includes child advocacy issues from the broader perspective represented by this report. Blueprints women should try to support Channel 2 in finding foundation money for such a series.

6. United Way and other private giving, not amenable to legal change, should hear from Blueprints women and other women about the necessity of equity in their giving to programs for girls and for black children, equalling their giving to programs for boys.